

News

District News: RS Portsmouth Marines lead Relay for Life

STAFF SGT. CHRIS D. HALE
MPA RS PORTSMOUTH, N.H.

RS PORTSMOUTH, N.H. – Marines from Recruiting Station Portsmouth participated in the American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life of Greater Manchester June 4. But, like just about everything Marines do, they did not do it the “normal” way.

The relay, which was first held in 1985 in Tacoma, Wash., is typically conducted by a team of walkers or runners, each taking turns on a track for a period of 24 hours. In 1985 it was just one man, Dr. Gordy Klatt, who walked and ran 83 miles around the track, raising money and awareness for the American Cancer Society. The following year, more than 200 people had joined his cause and the Relay for Life was officially born.

Today, the Relay for Life of the Greater Manchester area is just one of more than 3,800 that take place in communities across the nation and around the world.

For the nine Marines of RS Portsmouth who participated in the relay, June 4 started like every other day. They put their uniforms on and worked a full day. At the end of the day, at about 5 p.m., some of them went home for an hour or so, some kept on working. But at 7 p.m., they all stepped off from Portsmouth, beginning what would turn out to be a 14-hour, 43-mile hike that would eventually join the rest of the relay in Manchester.

Along busy highways and through bustling downtowns, down dark country roads and over many hills, the Marines



Marines from RS Portsmouth, N.H., come down the final stretch of their “victory lap” at the American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life of Greater Manchester June 5.

carried their own guidon as well as the banner for the American Cancer Society, gathering honks and cheers and waves and thanks all along the way.

When the Marine team finally arrived at the track in Livingston Park in Manchester the following morning, they were greeted by hundreds of cheering people who had been at the track all night doing the “normal” relay.

“When we marched that last three miles with a police escort through Manchester, we all thought we were going to die,” said Maj. T. Shane Tomko, RS Portsmouth commanding officer. “But when we walked up to the stadium and were greet-

ed by all of the people and cancer survivors, I thought I was going to cry. They cheered so much, that even though we all were in incredible pain, we had no other choice but to run a victory lap around the track to show these people ‘their Corps.’ Hordes of people thanked us for our contribution. We didn’t want the thanks, we just wanted to show these people that we cared about them.”

Some Marines would say that recruiting is the most important job in the Corps. Recruiters work long, hard hours, often 90 hours a week, looking for the best that America has to offer and beginning the process that will transform them into a

Marine. Tomko said that when he first proposed the idea of the 43-mile hike to his Marines he did it because “I wanted to remind my Marines what sacrifice is all about, and that recruiting is only one part of being a Marine. The Manchester area has been a huge proponent of the Marine Corps, and I wanted them to give something back to the community. Without the support of our citizens there would be no Marine Corps, this was just one way we could say thank you to them.”

So why the long hike instead of a team circling a track one at a time?

“Because Marines always think outside the box,” said Capt. Gregory Battaglia,

RS Portsmouth executive officer. “It was a challenge, and that’s what Marines live for ... it was a real gut-check.”

He also echoed Tomko saying it is important to give back to the community.

“We are a very physical organization and I wanted to illustrate to the public just how tough we truly are, and give something back to the community at the same time,” Tomko said. We are your neighbors, your friends and valued members of society. We are really no different than anyone else, except for one key element, and that element is that Marines are traditionally selfless.”

Staff Sgt. Joseph D. Crust, a recruiter in Waltham, Mass., was part of the Marine team because his mother-in-law died six months ago from cancer and, having seen what cancer can do to a person, said he wanted to be part of the cure.

Staff Sgt. James E. Davis, also a recruiter from Waltham, lost his grandfather to cancer and said the hike was a way to show that Marines go above and beyond. Still wincing with pain from blisters on his feet he responded to the question of whether or not he would do it again next year with a resounding “Yeah!”

Marines don’t do things like everyone else. It was the Germans during WWII who first nicknamed the Marines “Devil Dogs” for their relentlessness and ferocity in battle. These Devil Dogs worked a full day, walked all night, and then went back to work on Saturday. Above and beyond, outside the box or just plain crazy, they wanted to be just as ferocious in the battle against cancer, and this was their way of saying “thank you” to their community.

Depot dives into Deep Water Drills

LANCE CPL.
JUSTIN J. SHEMANSKI
STAFF WRITER

Welcoming a change of pace from their daily workout routine, several volunteers were ready to pull on their swim-suits, grab a little sun-tan lotion and head out to the Depot Family Pool Tuesday to participate in the Deep Water Drills advanced group fitness class sponsored by Semper Fit Health Promotions.

However, due to rainy weather, the class was cancelled and the eager swimmers will have to wait until next week to begin Semper Fit’s latest fitness challenge.

The half-hour classes, which will take place all summer long on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, are part of an intense workout program designed to get the hearts pumping and the muscles burning of even most physically fit participants.

“The program is designed to give people an option with how they work out and to take advantage of the warm weather,” said Michele Brittingham, fitness specialist and personal trainer. “This is the first time we’ve put together anything like this and we hope to get a lot of participants to come out for the challenge. It’s based on a program I participated in at

Camp Lejeune, [N.C.]”

Brittingham said participants could expect to be a part of an “extremely intense” workout. They will do various, timed exercises in the pool and will also spend time out of the water, doing things like crunches and running laps around the facility.

“One of the things we will do is deep-water sprints,” she said. “This exercise is really quite difficult when done in a pool because of the constant resistance you get from the water. This program is definitely not for everyone. You need to be used to working out and have to know how to swim well.”

But even though it can be more strenuous than conventional means of working out, exercising in the water does come with its benefits.

According to *musclemaster.com*, it is an excellent way to tone your body and muscles while being relatively easy on the joints, which is good news for those suffering from arthritis and other problems with the body’s joints and muscles.

Participants could push themselves to their limits in the water and still feel only a fraction of the soreness that they could have after doing a

couple laps around the track or other forms of high physical activity.

“No one should run anymore than three times a week,” said Dr. Todd May, senior medical officer at the BMC. “Anymore than that is unnecessary stress to the ankles and joints. This program will give people a great option to get in a great cardio workout without having to worry about tearing up their body.”

May also noted that water is an effective means of rehabilitation, providing a patient with a non-weight bearing form of exercise that can be performed without beating up injured muscles and other body parts.

“We just wanted to offer a unique way for people aboard the Depot to exercise,” said Brittingham. “People can sometimes get bored working out. Instead of doing the same routine in the fitness center everyday, this will give them a chance to come out and experience something different but, still get great results and it should be a good time for them too.”

For more information on joining the Deep Water Drills fitness classes, contact the Depot Fitness Center at 228-1563.

Parris Island Bowling Center



Tues. and Wed.	Fri.
4 – 10 p.m.	1 p.m. – midnight
Thurs.	Sat.
1 – 10 p.m.	5 p.m. – midnight
	Sun.
	1 – 7 p.m.

Call 228-7251

A living history ...



Cpl. Virgil P. Richardson

Retired Army Brigadier Gen. James H. Keller (center) presents a Japanese Officer’s Sword to Dr. Stephen Wise, Depot Museum curator, and Col. John Valentin, Commander, Marine Corps Recruit Depot/Eastern Recruiting Region, Parris Island. While in command of the 32nd Infantry during WWII, Keller seized the sword when he accepted the Japanese surrender in Korea. The sword will soon be on display at the Depot Museum.